

Written Testimony

Our statement would be as follows:

I, Julie Hautala, CEO of Gogebic County Community Mental Health Authority, oppose any legislation that would require a quorum to be physically present to vote or be counted towards the quorum. The NorthCare Network Entity Governing Board, which is the legal entity that will oversee the provisions of the Mental Health Code for the Upper Peninsula, is comprised of 3 members from each of the 5 Upper Peninsula Community Mental Health Boards. They currently meet at least bi-monthly in Marquette. A trip to Marquette from Gogebic County is a 120 mile trip (one way) for a typical 2 hour meeting. The summer months do not present a problem for travelling but our Fall, Winter and Spring can and does make the trip at times impossible. Our snowstorms typically begin in October and end in May. Just last week we received over 10 inches of snow that made traveling anywhere dangerous. A video conferenced meeting allows all members the ability to be present, seen, and heard. Video Conferencing results in greater attendance and almost always attaining a quorum. Video conferencing not only saves our members travel time, but saves our agency considerable travel costs. At a time when resources are scarce and continue to dwindle, we cannot afford to add to our expenses...it simply does not make sense. We have the technology to attend via video conference, which save resources that are intended to be utilized for services to the most vulnerable citizens of Gogebic County.

Thank You,

Julie Hautala, CEO
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